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With Illustrations

BY

J. E. MILLAIS.



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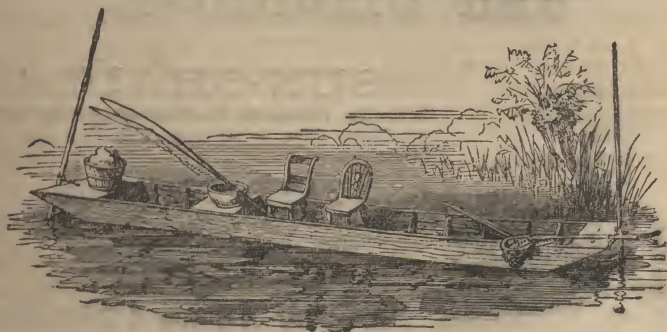
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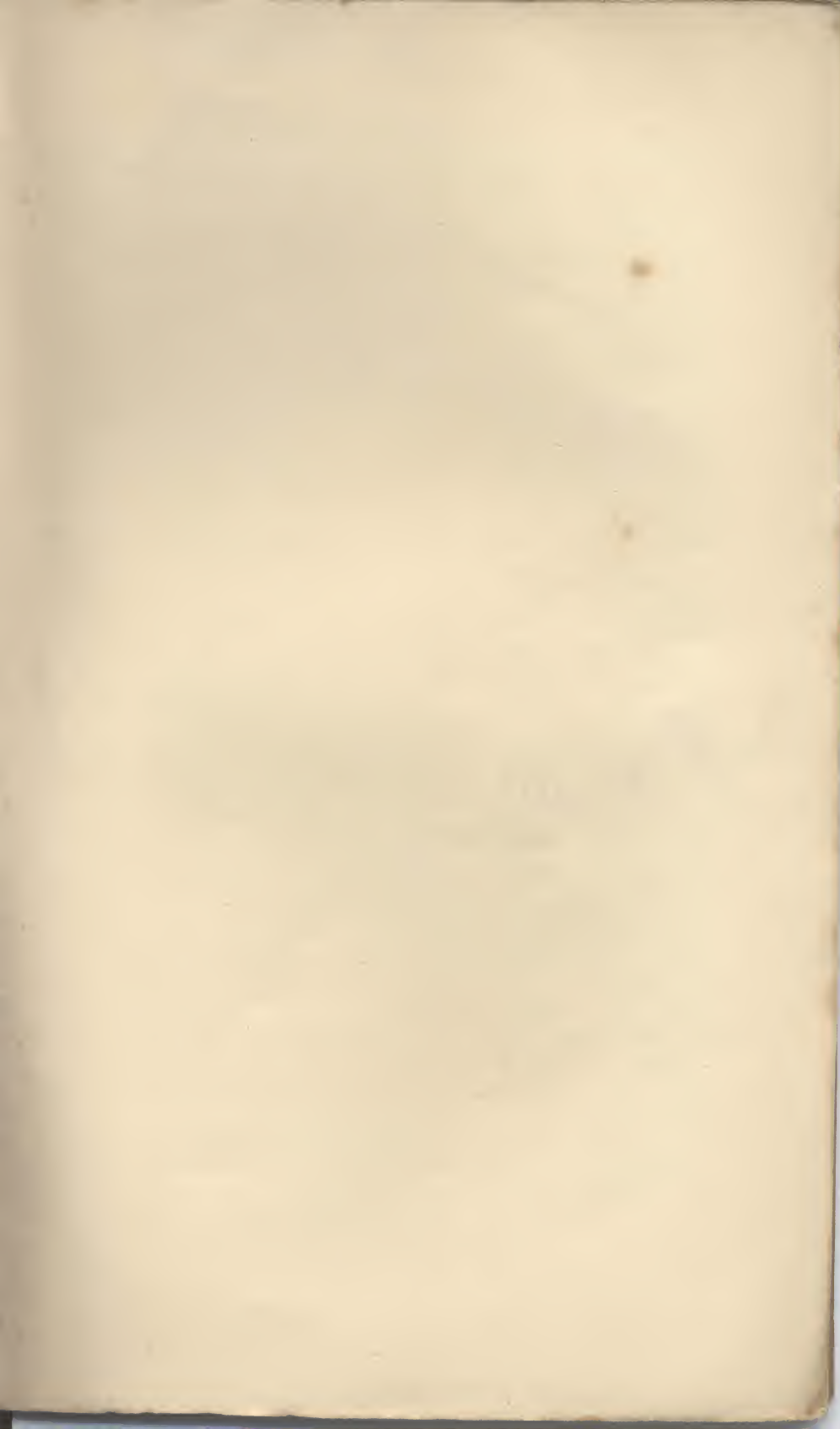
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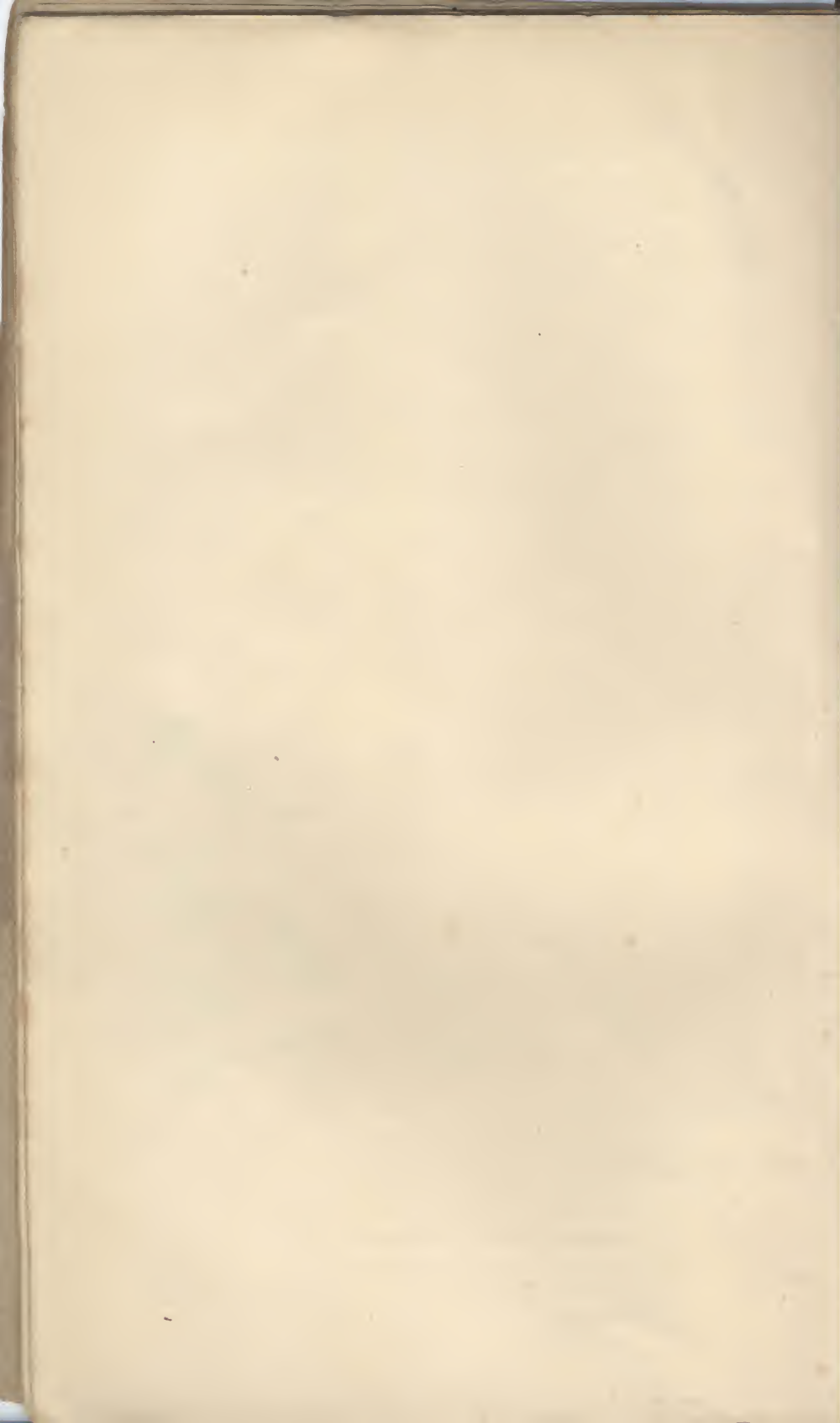




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CHAPTER XVII.

VON BAHR.

It will be remembered that Mr. Crabwitz was sent across from Lincoln's Inn to Bedford Row to ascertain the present address of old Mr. Round. 'Mr. Round is at Birmingham,' he said, coming back. 'Every one connected with the profession is at Birmingham, except——'

'The more fools they,' said Mr. Furnival.

'I am thinking of going down myself this evening,' said Mr. Crabwitz. 'As you will be out of town, sir, I suppose I can be spared?'

'You too!'

'And why not me, Mr. Furnival? When all the profession is meeting together, why should not I be there as well as another? I hope you do not deny me my right to feel an interest in the great subjects which are being discussed.'

'Not in the least, Mr. Crabwitz. I do not deny you your right to be Lord Chief Justice, if you can accomplish it. But you cannot be Lord Chief Justice and my clerk at the same time. Nor can you be in my chambers if you are at Birmingham. I rather think I must trouble you to remain here, as I cannot tell at what moment I may be in town again.'

'Then, sir, I'm afraid——' Mr. Crabwitz began his speech and then faltered. He was going to tell Mr. Furnival that he must suit himself with another clerk, when he remembered his fees, and paused. It would be very pleasant to him to quit Mr. Furnival, but where could he get such another place? He knew that he himself was invaluable, but then he was invaluable only to Mr. Furnival. Mr. Furnival would be mad to part with him, Mr. Crabwitz thought; but then would he not be almost more mad to part with Mr. Furnival?

'Eh; well?' said Mr. Furnival.

'Oh! of course; if you desire it, Mr. Furnival, I will remain. But I must say I think it is rather hard.'

'Look here, Mr. Crabwitz; if you think my service is too hard upon you, you had better leave it. But if you take upon yourself to tell me so again, you must leave it. Remember that.' Mr. Fur-

nival possessed the master mind of the two; and Mr. Crabwitz felt this as he slunk back to his own room.

So Mr. Round also was at Birmingham, and could be seen there. This was so far well; and Mr. Furnival, having again with ruthless malice sent Mr. Crabwitz for a cab, at once started for the Euston Square Station. He could master Mr. Crabwitz, and felt a certain pleasure in having done so; but could he master Mrs. F.? That lady had on one or two late occasions shown her anger at the existing state of her domestic affairs, and had once previously gone so far as to make her lord understand that she was jealous of his proceedings with reference to other goddesses. But she had never before done this in the presence of other people;—she had never allowed any special goddess to see that she was the special object of such jealousy. Now she had not only committed herself in this way, but had also committed him, making him feel himself to be ridiculous; and it was highly necessary that some steps should be taken;—if he only knew what step! All which kept his mind active as he journeyed in the cab.

At the station he found three or four other lawyers, all bound for Birmingham. Indeed, during this fortnight the whole line had been alive with learned gentlemen going to and fro, discussing weighty points as they rattled along the iron road, and shaking their ponderous heads at the new ideas which were being ventilated. Mr. Furnival, with many others—indeed, with most of those who were so far advanced in the world as to be making bread by their profession—was of opinion that all this palaver that was going on in the various tongues of Babel would end as it began—in words. ‘*Vox et præterea nihil.*’ To practical Englishmen most of these international congresses seem to arrive at nothing else. Men will not be talked out of the convictions of their lives. No living orator would convince a grocer that coffee should be sold without chicory; and no amount of eloquence will make an English lawyer think that loyalty to truth should come before loyalty to his client. And therefore our own pundits, though on this occasion they went to Birmingham, summoned by the greatness of the occasion, by the dignity of foreign names, by interest in the question, and by the influence of such men as Lord Boanerges, went there without any doubt on their minds as to the rectitude of their own practice, and fortified with strong resolves to resist all idea of change.

And indeed one cannot understand how the bent of any man’s mind should be altered by the sayings and doings of such a congress. ‘Well, Johnson, what have you all been doing to-day?’ asked Mr. Furnival of a special friend whom he chanced to meet at the club which had been extemporized at Birmingham.

‘We have had a paper read by Von Bauhr. It lasted three hours.’

'Three hours! heavens! Von Bauhr is, I think, from Berlin.'

'Yes; he and Dr. Slotacher. Slotacher is to read his paper the day after to-morrow.'

'Then I think I shall go to London again. But what did Von Bauhr say to you during those three hours?'

'Of course it was all in German, and I don't suppose that any one understood him,—unless it was Boanerges. But I believe it was the old story, going to show that the same man might be judge, advocate, and jury.'

'No doubt;—if men were machines, and if you could find such machines perfect at all points in their machinery.'

'And if the machines had no hearts?'

'Machines don't have hearts,' said Mr. Furnival; 'especially those in Germany. And what did Boanerges say? His answer did not take three hours more, I hope.'

'About twenty minutes; but what he did say was lost on Von Bauhr, who understands as much English as I do German. He said that the practice of the Prussian courts had always been to him a subject of intense interest, and that the general justice of their verdicts could not be impugned.'

'Nor ought it, seeing that a single trial for murder will occupy a court for three weeks. He should have asked Von Bauhr how much work he usually got through in the course of a sessions. I don't seem to have lost much by being away. By-the-by, do you happen to know whether Round is here?'

'What, old Round? I saw him in the hall to-day yawning as though he would burst.' And then Mr. Furnival strolled off to look for the attorney among the various purlieus frequented by the learned strangers.

'Furnival,' said another barrister, accosting him—an elderly man, small, with sharp eyes and bushy eyebrows, dirty in his attire and poor in his general appearance, 'have you seen Judge Staveley?' This was Mr. Chaffanbrass, great at the Old Bailey, a man well able to hold his own in spite of the meanness of his appearance. At such a meeting as this the English bar generally could have had no better representative than Mr. Chaffanbrass.

'No; is he here?'

'He must be here. He is the only man they could find who knows enough Italian to understand what that fat fellow from Florence will say to-morrow.'

'We're to have the Italian to-morrow, are we?'

'Yes; and Staveley afterwards. It's as good as a play; only, like all plays, it's three times too long. I wonder whether anybody here believes in it?'

'Yes, Felix Graham does.'

'He believes everything—unless it is the Bible. He is one of

those young men who look for an instant millennium, and who regard themselves not only as the prophets who foretell it, but as the preachers who will produce it. For myself, I am too old for a new gospel, with Felix Graham as an apostle.'

'They say that Boanerges thinks a great deal of him.'

'That can't be true, for Boanerges never thought much of any one but himself. Well, I'm off to bed, for I find a day here ten times more fatiguing than the Old Bailey in July.'

On the whole the meeting was rather dull, as such meetings usually are. It must not be supposed that any lawyer could get up at will, as the spirit moved him, and utter his own ideas; or that all members of the congress could speak if only they could catch the speaker's eye. Had this been so, a man might have been supported by the hope of having some finger in the pie, sooner or later. But in such case the congress would have lasted for ever. As it was, the names of those who were invited to address the meeting were arranged, and of course men from each country were selected who were best known in their own special walks of their profession. But then these best-known men took an unfair advantage of their position, and were ruthless in the lengthy cruelty of their addresses. Von Bauhr at Berlin was no doubt a great lawyer, but he should not have felt so confident that the legal proceedings of England and of the civilized world in general could be reformed by his reading that book of his from the rostrum in the hall at Birmingham! The civilized world in general, as there represented, had been disgusted, and it was surmised that poor Dr. Slotacher would find but a meagre audience when his turn came.

At last Mr. Furnival succeeded in hunting up Mr. Round, and found him recruiting outraged nature with a glass of brandy and water and a cigar. 'Looking for me, have you? Well, here I am; that is to say, what is left of me. Were you in the hall to-day?'

'No; I was up in town.'

'Ah! that accounts for your being so fresh. I wish I had been there. Do you ever do anything in this way?' and Mr. Round touched the outside of his glass of toddy with his spoon. Mr. Furnival said that he never did do anything in that way, which was true. Port wine was his way, and it may be doubted whether on the whole it is not the more dangerous way of the two. But Mr. Furnival, though he would not drink brandy and water or smoke cigars, sat down opposite to Mr. Round, and had soon broached the subject which was on his mind.

'Yes,' said the attorney, 'it is quite true that I had a letter on the subject from Mr. Mason. The lady is not wrong in supposing that some one is moving in the matter.'

'And your client wishes you to take up the case again?'

'No doubt he does. He was not a man that I ever greatly liked,

Mr. Furnival, though I believe he means well. He thinks that he has been ill used; and perhaps he was ill used—by his father.'

'But that can be no possible reason for badgering the life out of his father's widow twenty years after his father's death!'

'Of course he thinks that he has some new evidence. I can't say I looked into the matter much myself. I did read the letter; but that was all, and then I handed it to my son. As far as I remember, Mr. Mason said that some attorney at Hamworth had been to him.'

'Exactly; a low fellow whom you would be ashamed to see in your office! He fancies that young Mason has injured him; and though he has received numberless benefits from Lady Mason, this is the way in which he chooses to be revenged on her son.'

'We should have nothing to do with such a matter as that, you know. It's not our line.'

'No, of course it is not; I am well aware of that. And I am equally well aware that nothing Mr. Mason can do can shake Lady Mason's title, or rather her son's title, to the property. But, Mr. Round, if he be encouraged to gratify his malice——'

'If who be encouraged?'

'Your client, Mr. Mason of Groby;—there can be no doubt that he might harass this unfortunate lady till he brought her nearly to the grave.'

'That would be a pity, for I believe she's still an uncommon pretty woman.' And the attorney indulged in a little fat inward chuckle; for in these days Mr. Furnival's taste with reference to strange goddesses was beginning to be understood by the profession.

'She is a very old friend of mine,' said Mr. Furnival, gravely, 'a very old friend indeed; and if I were to desert her now, she would have no one to whom she could look.'

'Oh, ah, yes; I'm sure you're very kind;' and Mr. Round altered his face and tone, so that they might be in conformity with those of his companion. 'Anything I can do, of course I shall be very happy. I should be slow, myself, to advise my client to try the matter again, but to tell the truth anything of this kind would go to my son now. I did read Mr. Mason's letter, but I immediately handed it to Matthew.'

'I will tell you how you can oblige me, Mr. Round.'

'Do tell me; I am sure I shall be very happy.'

'Look into this matter yourself, and talk it over with Mr. Mason before you allow anything to be done. It is not that I doubt your son's discretion. Indeed we all know what an exceedingly good man of business he is.'

'Matthew is sharp enough,' said the prosperous father.

'But then young men are apt to be too sharp. I don't know whether you remember the case about that Orley Farm, Mr. Round.'

‘As well as if it were yesterday,’ said the attorney.

‘Then you must recollect how thoroughly you were convinced that your client had not a leg to stand upon.’

‘It was I that insisted that he should not carry it before the Chancellor. Crook had the general management of those cases then, and would have gone on; but I said, no. I would not see my client’s money wasted in such a wild-goose chase. In the first place the property was not worth it; and in the next place there was nothing to impugn the will. If I remember right it all turned on whether an old man who had signed as witness was well enough to write his name.’

‘That was the point.’

‘And I think it was shown that he had himself signed a receipt on that very day—or the day after, or the day before. It was something of that kind.’

‘Exactly; those were the facts. As regards the result of a new trial, no sane man, I fancy, could have any doubt. You know as well as any one living how great is the strength of twenty years of possession——’

‘It would be very strong on her side, certainly.’

‘He would not have a chance; of course not. But, Mr. Round, he might make that poor woman so wretched that death would be a relief to her. Now it may be possible that something looking like fresh evidence may have been discovered; something of this kind probably has been found, or this man would not be moving; he would not have gone to the expense of a journey to Yorkshire had he not got hold of some new story.’

‘He has something in his head; you may be sure of that.’

‘Don’t let your son be run away with by this, or advise your client to incur the terrible expense of a new trial, without knowing what you are about. I tell you fairly that I do dread such a trial on this poor lady’s account. Reflect what it would be, Mr. Round, to any lady of your own family.’

‘I don’t think Mrs. Round would mind it much; that is, if she were sure of her case.’

‘She is a strong-minded woman; but poor Lady Mason ——.’

‘She was strong-minded enough too, if I remember right, at the last trial. I shall never forget how composed she was when old Bennett tried to shake her evidence. Do you remember how bothered he was?’

‘He was an excellent lawyer,—was Bennett. There are few better men at the bar now-a-days.’

‘You wouldn’t have found him down here, Mr. Furnival, listening to a German lecture three hours’ long. I don’t know how it is, but I think we all used to work harder in those days than the young men do now.’ And then these eulogists of past days went back to

the memories of their youths, declaring how in the old glorious years, now gone, no congress such as this would have had a chance of success. Men had men's work to do then, and were not wont to play the fool, first at one provincial town and then at another, but stuck to their oars and made their fortunes. 'It seems to me, Mr. Furnival,' said Mr. Round, 'that this is all child's play, and to tell the truth I am half ashamed of myself for being here.'

'And you'll look into that matter yourself, Mr. Round?'

'Yes, I will, certainly.'

'I shall take it as a great favour. Of course you will advise your client in accordance with any new facts which may be brought before you; but as I feel certain that no case against young Mason can have any merits, I do hope that you will be able to suggest to Mr. Mason of Groby that the matter should be allowed to rest.' And then Mr. Furnival took his leave, still thinking how far it might be possible that the enemy's side of the question might be supported by real merits. Mr. Round was a good-natured old fellow, and if the case could be inveigled out of his son's hands and into his own, it might be possible that even real merits should avail nothing.

'I confess I am getting rather tired of it,' said Felix Graham that evening to his friend young Staveley, as he stood outside his bedroom door at the top of a narrow flight of stairs in the back part of a large hotel at Birmingham.

'Tired of it! I should think you are too.'

'But nevertheless I am as sure as ever that good will come from it. I am inclined to think that the same kind of thing must be endured before any improvement is made in anything.'

'That all reformers have to undergo Von Bauhr?'

'Yes, all of them that do any good. Von Bauhr's words were very dry, no doubt.'

'You don't mean to say that you understood them?'

'Not many of them. A few here and there, for the first half-hour, came trembling home to my dull comprehension, and then—'

'You went to sleep.'

'The sounds became too difficult for my ears; but dry and dull and hard as they were, they will not absolutely fall to the ground. He had a meaning in them, and that meaning will reproduce itself in some shape.'

'Heaven forbid that it should ever do so in my presence! All the iniquities of which the English bar may be guilty cannot be so intolerable to humanity as Von Bauhr.'

'Well, good-night, old fellow; your governor is to give us his ideas to-morrow, and perhaps he will be as bad to the Germans as your Von Bauhr was to us.'

'Then I can only say that my governor will be very cruel to the Germans.' And so they two went to their dreams.

In the mean time Von Bauhr was sitting alone looking back on the past hours with ideas and views very different from those of the many English lawyers who were at that time discussing his demerits. To him the day had been one long triumph, for his voice had sounded sweet in his own ears as, period after period, he had poured forth in full flowing language the gathered wisdom and experience of his life. Public men in England have so much to do that they cannot give time to the preparation of speeches for such meetings as these, but Von Bauhr had been at work on his pamphlet for months. Nay, taking it in the whole, had he not been at work on it for years? And now a kind Providence had given him the opportunity of pouring it forth before the assembled pundits gathered from all the nations of the civilized world.

As he sat there, solitary in his bedroom, his hands dropped down by his side, his pipe hung from his mouth on to his breast, and his eyes, turned up to the ceiling, were lighted almost with inspiration. Men there at the congress, Mr. Chaffanbrass, young Staveley, Felix Graham, and others, had regarded him as an impersonation of dullness; but through his mind and brain, as he sat there wrapped in his old dressing-gown, there ran thoughts which seemed to lift him lightly from the earth into an elysium of justice and mercy. And at the end of this elysium, which was not wild in its beauty, but trim and orderly in its gracefulness—as might be a beer-garden at Munich—there stood among flowers and vases a pedestal, grand above all other pedestals in that garden; and on this there was a bust with an inscription:—‘To Von Bauhr, who reformed the laws of nations.’

It was a grand thought; and though there was in it much of human conceit, there was in it also much of human philanthropy. If a reign of justice could be restored through his efforts—through those efforts in which on this hallowed day he had been enabled to make so great a progress—how beautiful would it be! And then as he sat there, while the smoke still curled from his unconscious nostrils, he felt that he loved all Germans, all Englishmen, even all Frenchmen, in his very heart of hearts, and especially those who had travelled wearily to this English town that they might listen to the results of his wisdom. He said to himself, and said truly, that he loved the world, and that he would willingly spend himself in these great endeavours for the amelioration of its laws and the perfection of its judicial proceedings. And then he betook himself to bed in a frame of mind that was not unenviable.

I am inclined, myself, to agree with Felix Graham that such efforts are seldom absolutely wasted. A man who strives honestly to do good will generally do good, though seldom perhaps as much as he has himself anticipated. Let Von Bauhr have his pedestal among the flowers, even though it be small and humble!

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE ENGLISH VON BAUHR.

ON the following morning, before breakfast, Felix Graham and Augustus Staveley prepared themselves for the labours of the coming day by a walk into the country; for even at Birmingham, by perseverance, a walk into the country may be attained,—and very pretty country it is when reached. These congress meetings did not begin before eleven, so that for those who were active time for matutinal exercise was allowed.

Augustus Staveley was the only son of the judge who on that day was to defend the laws of England from such attacks as might be made on them by a very fat advocate from Florence. Of Judge Staveley himself much need not be said now, except that he lived at Noningsby near Alston, distant from The Cleeve about nine miles, and that at his house Sophia Furnival had been invited to pass the coming Christmas. His son was a handsome clever fellow, who had nearly succeeded in getting the Newdegate, and was now a member of the Middle Temple. He was destined to follow the steps of his father, and become a light at the Common Law bar; but hitherto he had not made much essential progress. The world had been too pleasant to him to allow of his giving many of his hours to work. His father was one of the best men in the world, revered on the bench, and loved by all men; but he had not sufficient parental sternness to admit of his driving his son well into harness. He himself had begun the world with little or nothing, and had therefore succeeded; but his son was already possessed of almost everything that he could want, and therefore his success seemed doubtful. His chambers were luxuriously furnished, he had his horse in Piccadilly, his father's house at Noningsby was always open to him, and the society of London spread out for him all its allurements. Under such circumstances how could it be expected that he should work? Nevertheless he did talk of working, and had some idea in his head of the manner in which he would do so. To a certain extent he had worked, and he could talk fluently of the little that he knew. The idea of a *far niente* life would have been intolerable to him; but there were many among his friends who began to think that such a life would nevertheless be his ultimate destiny. Nor did

it much matter, they said, for the judge was known to have made money.

But his friend Felix Graham was rowing in a very different boat; and of him also many prophesied that he would hardly be able to push his craft up against the strength of the stream. Not that he was an idle man, but that he would not work at his oars in the only approved method of making progress for his boat. He also had been at Oxford; but he had done little there except talk at a debating society, and make himself notorious by certain ideas on religious subjects which were not popular at the University. He had left without taking a degree, in consequence, as it was believed, of some such notions, and had now been called to the bar with a fixed resolve to open that oyster with such weapons, offensive and defensive, as nature had given to him. But here, as at Oxford, he would not labour on the same terms with other men, or make himself subject to the same conventional rules; and therefore it seemed only too probable that he might win no prize. He had ideas of his own that men should pursue their labours without special conventional regulations, but should be guided in their work by the general great rules of the world,—such for instance as those given in the commandments:—Thou shalt not bear false witness; Thou shalt not steal; and others. His notions no doubt were great, and perhaps were good; but hitherto they had not led him to much pecuniary success in his profession. A sort of a name he had obtained, but it was not a name sweet in the ears of practising attorneys.

And yet it behoved Felix Graham to make money, for none was coming to him ready made from any father. Father or mother he had none, nor uncles and aunts likely to be of service to him. He had begun the world with some small sum, which had grown smaller and smaller, till now there was left to him hardly enough to create an infinitesimal dividend. But he was not a man to become down-hearted on that account. A living of some kind he could pick up, and did now procure for himself, from the press of the day. He wrote poetry for the periodicals, and politics for the penny papers with considerable success and sufficient pecuniary results. He would sooner do this, he often boasted, than abandon his great ideas or descend into the arena with other weapons than those which he regarded as fitting for an honest man's hand.

Augustus Staveley, who could be very prudent for his friend, declared that marriage would set him right. If Felix would marry he would quietly slip his neck into the collar and work along with the team, as useful a horse as ever was put at the wheel of a coach. But Felix did not seem inclined to marry. He had notions about that also, and was believed by one or two who knew him intimately to cherish an insane affection for some unknown damsel, whose

parentage, education, and future were not likely to assist his views in the outer world. Some said that he was educating this damsel for his wife,—moulding her, so that she might be made fit to suit his taste; but Augustus, though he knew the secret of all this, was of opinion that it would come right at last. ‘He’ll meet some girl in the world with a hatful of money, a pretty face, and a sharp tongue; then he’ll bestow his moulded bride on a neighbouring baker with two hundred pounds for her fortune;—and everybody will be happy.’

Felix Graham was by no means a handsome man. He was tall and thin, and his face had been slightly marked with the small-pox. He stooped in his gait as he walked, and was often awkward with his hands and legs. But he was full of enthusiasm, indomitable, as far as pluck would make him so, in contests of all kinds, and when he talked on subjects which were near his heart there was a radiance about him which certainly might win the love of the pretty girl with the sharp tongue and the hatful of money. Staveley, who really loved him, had already selected the prize, and she was no other than our friend, Sophia Furnival. The sharp tongue and the pretty face and the hatful of money would all be there; but then Sophia Furnival was a girl who might perhaps expect in return for these things more than an ugly face which could occasionally become radiant with enthusiasm.

The two men had got away from the thickness of the Birmingham smoke, and were seated on the top rung of a gate leading into a stubble field. So far they had gone with mutual consent, but further than this Staveley refused to go. He was seated with a cigar in his mouth. Graham also was smoking, but he was accommodated with a short pipe.

‘A walk before breakfast is all very well,’ said Staveley, ‘but I am not going on a pilgrimage. We are four miles from the inn this minute.’

‘And for your energies that is a good deal. Only think that you should have been doing anything for two hours before you begin to feed.’

‘I wonder why matutinal labour should always be considered as so meritorious. Merely, I take it, because it is disagreeable.’

‘It proves that the man can make an effort.’

‘Every prig who wishes to have it believed that he does more than his neighbours either burns the midnight lamp or gets up at four in the morning. Good wholesome work between breakfast and dinner never seems to count for anything.’

‘Have you ever tried?’

‘Yes; I am trying now, here at Birmingham.’

‘Not you.’

‘That’s so like you, Graham. You don’t believe that anybody is

attending to what is going on except yourself. I mean to-day to take in the whole theory of Italian jurisprudence.'

'I have no doubt that you may do so with advantage. I do not suppose that it is very good, but it must at any rate be better than our own. Come, let us go back to the town; my pipe is finished.'

'Fill another, there's a good fellow. I can't afford to throw away my cigar, and I hate walking and smoking. You mean to assert that our whole system is bad, and rotten, and unjust?'

'I mean to say that I think so.'

'And yet we consider ourselves the greatest people in the world, —or at any rate the honestest.'

'I think we are; but laws and their management have nothing to do with making people honest. Good laws won't make people honest, nor bad laws dishonest.'

'But a people who are dishonest in one trade will probably be dishonest in others. Now, you go so far as to say that all English lawyers are rogues.'

'I have never said so. I believe your father to be as honest a man as ever breathed.'

'Thank you, sir,' and Staveley lifted his hat.

'And I would fain hope that I am an honest man myself.'

'Ah, but you don't make money by it.'

'What I do mean is this, that from our love of precedent and ceremony and old usages, we have retained a system which contains many of the barbarities of the feudal times, and also many of its lies. We try our culprit as we did in the old days of the ordeal. If luck will carry him through the hot ploughshares, we let him escape though we know him to be guilty. We give him the advantage of every technicality, and teach him to lie in his own defence, if nature has not sufficiently so taught him already.'

'You mean as to his plea of not guilty.'

'No, I don't; that is little or nothing. We ask him whether or no he confesses his guilt in a foolish way, tending to induce him to deny it; but that is not much. Guilt seldom will confess as long as a chance remains. But we teach him to lie, or rather we lie for him during the whole ceremony of his trial. We think it merciful to give him chances of escape, and hunt him as we do a fox, in obedience to certain laws framed for his protection.'

'And should he have no protection?'

'None certainly, as a guilty man; none which may tend towards the concealing of his guilt. Till that be ascertained, proclaimed, and made apparent, every man's hand should be against him.'

'But if he is innocent?'

'Therefore let him be tried with every possible care. I know

you understand what I mean, though you look as though you did not. For the protection of his innocence let astute and good men work their best, but for the concealing of his guilt let no astute or good man work at all.'

'And you would leave the poor victim in the dock without defence?'

'By no means. Let the poor victim, as you call him,—who in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred is a rat who has been preying in our granaries,—let him, I say, have his defender,—the defender of his possible innocence, not the protector of his probable guilt. It all resolves itself into this. Let every lawyer go into court with a mind resolved to make conspicuous to the light of day that which seems to him to be the truth. A lawyer who does not do that—who does the reverse of that, has in my mind undertaken work which is unfit for a gentleman and impossible for an honest man.'

'What a pity it is that you should not have an opportunity of rivalling Von Bauhr at the congress!'

'I have no doubt that Von Bauhr said a great deal of the same nature; and what Von Bauhr said will not wholly be wasted, though it may not yet have reached our sublime understandings.'

'Perhaps he will vouchsafe to us a translation.'

'It would be useless at present, seeing that we cannot bring ourselves to believe it possible that a foreigner should in any respect be wiser than ourselves. If any such point out to us our follies, we at once claim those follies as the special evidences of our wisdom. We are so self-satisfied with our own customs, that we hold up our hands with surprise at the fatuity of men who presume to point out to us their defects. Those practices in which we most widely depart from the broad and recognized morality of all civilized ages and countries are to us the Palladiums of our jurisprudence. Modes of proceeding which, if now first proposed to us, would be thought to come direct from the devil, have been made so sacred by time that they have lost all the horror of their falseness in the holiness of their age. We cannot understand that other nations look upon such doings as we regard the human sacrifices of the Brahmins; but the fact is that we drive a Juggernaut's car through every assize town in the country, three times a year, and allow it to be dragged ruthlessly through the streets of the metropolis at all times and seasons. Now come back to breakfast, for I won't wait here any longer.' Seeing that these were the ideas of Felix Graham, it is hardly a matter of wonder that such men as Mr. Furnival and Mr. Round should have regarded his success at the bar as doubtful.

'Uncommon bad mutton chops these are,' said Staveley, as they sat at their meal in the coffee-room of the Imperial Hotel.

'Are they?' said Graham. 'They seem to me much the same as other mutton chops.'

‘They are uneatable. And look at this for coffee! Waiter, take this away, and have some made fresh.’

‘Yes, sir,’ said the waiter, striving to escape without further comment.

‘And, waiter—’

‘Yes, sir,’ and the poor overdriven functionary returned.

‘Ask them from me whether they know how to make coffee. It does not consist of an unlimited supply of lukewarm water poured over an infinitesimal proportion of chicory. That process, time-honoured in the hotel line, will not produce the beverage called coffee. Will you have the goodness to explain that in the bar as coming from me?’

‘Yes, sir,’ said the waiter; and then he was allowed to disappear.

‘How can you give yourself so much trouble with no possible hope of an advantageous result?’ said Felix Graham.

‘That’s what you weak men always say. Perseverance in such a course will produce results. It is because we put up with bad things that hotel-keepers continue to give them to us. Three or four Frenchmen were dining with my father yesterday at the King’s Head, and I had to sit at the bottom of the table. I declare to you that I literally blushed for my country; I did indeed. It was useless to say anything then, but it was quite clear that there was nothing that one of them could eat. At any hotel in France you’ll get a good dinner; but we’re so proud that we are ashamed to take lessons.’ And thus Augustus Staveley was quite as loud against his own country, and as laudatory with regard to others, as Felix Graham had been before breakfast.

And so the congress went on at Birmingham. The fat Italian from Tuscany read his paper; but as he, though judge in his own country and reformer here in England, was somewhat given to comedy, this morning was not so dull as that which had been devoted to Von Bauhr. After him Judge Staveley made a very elegant, and some said, a very eloquent speech; and so that day was done. Many other days also wore themselves away in this process; numerous addresses were read, and answers made to them, and the newspapers for the time were full of law. The defence of our own system, which was supposed to be the most remarkable for its pertinacity, if not for its justice, came from Mr. Furnival, who roused himself to a divine wrath for the occasion. And then the famous congress at Birmingham was brought to a close, and all the foreigners returned to their own countries.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE STAVELEY FAMILY.

THE next two months passed by without any events which deserve our special notice, unless it be that Mr. Joseph Mason and Mr. Dockwrath had a meeting in the room of Mr. Matthew Round, in Bedford Row. Mr. Dockwrath struggled hard to effect this without the presence of the London attorney; but he struggled in vain. Mr. Round was not the man to allow any stranger to tamper with his client, and Mr. Dockwrath was forced to lower his flag before him. The result was that the document or documents which had been discovered at Hamworth were brought up to Bedford Row; and Dockwrath at last made up his mind that as he could not supplant Matthew Round, he would consent to fight under him as his lieutenant—or even as his sergeant or corporal, if no higher position might be allowed to him.

‘There is something in it, certainly, Mr. Mason,’ said young Round; ‘but I cannot undertake to say as yet that we are in a position to prove the point.’

‘It will be proved,’ said Mr. Dockwrath.

‘I confess it seems to me very clear,’ said Mr. Mason, who by this time had been made to understand the bearings of the question. ‘It is evident that she chose that day for her date because those two persons had then been called upon to act as witnesses to that other deed.’

‘That of course is our allegation. I only say that we may have some difficulty in proving it.

‘The crafty, thieving swindler!’ exclaimed Mr. Mason.

‘She has been sharp enough if it is as we think,’ said Round, laughing; and then there was nothing more done in the matter for some time, to the great disgust both of Mr. Dockwrath and Mr. Mason. Old Mr. Round had kept his promise to Mr. Furnival; or, at least, had done something towards keeping it. He had not himself taken the matter into his own hands, but he had begged his son to be cautious. ‘It’s not the sort of business that we care for, Mat.,’ said he; ‘and as for that fellow down in Yorkshire, I never liked him.’ To this Mat. had answered that neither did he like Mr. Mason; but as the case had about it some very remarkable

points, it was necessary to look into it; and then the matter was allowed to stand over till after Christmas.

We will now change the scene to Noningsby, the judge's country seat, near Alston, at which a party was assembled for the Christmas holidays. The judge was there of course,—without his wig; in which guise I am inclined to think that judges spend the more comfortable hours of their existence: and there also was Lady Staveley, her presence at home being altogether a matter of course, inasmuch as she had no other home than Noningsby. For many years past, ever since the happy day on which Noningsby had been acquired, she had repudiated London; and the poor judge, when called upon by his duties to reside there, was compelled to live like a bachelor, in lodgings. Lady Staveley was a good, motherly, warm-hearted woman, who thought a great deal about her flowers and fruit, believing that no one else had them so excellent,—much also about her butter and eggs, which in other houses were, in her opinion, generally unfit to be eaten; she thought also a great deal about her children, who were all swans,—though, as she often observed with a happy sigh, those of her neighbours were so uncommonly like geese. But she thought most of all of her husband, who in her eyes was the perfection of all manly virtues. She had made up her mind that the position of a puisne judge in England was the highest which could fall to the lot of any mere mortal. To become a Lord Chancellor, or a Lord Chief Justice, or a Chief Baron, a man must dabble with Parliament, politics, and dirt; but the bench-fellows of these politicians were selected for their wisdom, high conduct, knowledge, and discretion. Of all such selections, that made by the late king when he chose her husband, was the one which had done most honour to England, and had been in all its results most beneficial to Englishmen. Such was her creed with reference to domestic matters.

The Staveley young people at present were only two in number, Augustus, namely, and his sister Madeline. The eldest daughter was married, and therefore, though she spent these Christmas holidays at Noningsby, must not be regarded as one of the Noningsby family. Of Augustus we have said enough; but as I intend that Madeline Staveley shall, to many of my readers, be the most interesting personage in this story, I must pause to say something of her. I must say something of her; and as, with all women, the outward and visible signs of grace and beauty are those which are thought of the most, or at any rate spoken of the oftenest, I will begin with her exterior attributes. And that the muses may assist me in my endeavour, teaching my rough hands to draw with some accuracy the delicate lines of female beauty, I now make to them my humble but earnest prayer.

Madeline Staveley was at this time about nineteen years of age.

That she was perfect in her beauty I cannot ask the muses to say, but that she will some day become so, I think the goddesses may be requested to prophesy. At present she was very slight, and appeared to be almost too tall for her form. She was indeed above the average height of women, and from her brother encountered some ridicule on this head; but not the less were all her movements soft, graceful, and fawnlike as should be those of a young girl. She was still at this time a child in heart and spirit, and could have played as a child had not the instinct of a woman taught to her the expediency of a staid demeanour. There is nothing among the wonders of womanhood more wonderful than this, that the young mind and young heart—hearts and minds young as youth can make them, and in their natures as gay,—can assume the gravity and discretion of threescore years and maintain it successfully before all comers. And this is done, not as a lesson that has been taught, but as the result of an instinct implanted from the birth. Let us remember the mirth of our sisters in our homes, and their altered demeanours when those homes were opened to strangers; and remember also that this change had come from the inward working of their own feminine natures!

But I am altogether departing from Madeline Staveley's external graces. It was a pity almost that she should ever have become grave, because with her it was her smile that was so lovely. She smiled with her whole face. There was at such moments a peculiar laughing light in her gray eyes, which inspired one with an earnest desire to be in her confidence; she smiled with her soft cheek, the light tints of which would become a shade more pink from the excitement, as they softly rippled into dimples; she smiled with her forehead which would catch the light from her eyes and arch itself in its glory; but above all she smiled with her mouth, just showing, but hardly showing, the beauty of the pearls within. I never saw the face of a woman whose mouth was equal in pure beauty, in beauty that was expressive of feeling, to that of Madeline Staveley. Many have I seen with a richer lip, with a more luxurious curve, much more tempting as baits to the villainy and rudeness of man; but never one that told so much by its own mute eloquence of a woman's happy heart and a woman's happy beauty. It was lovely as I have said in its mirth, but if possible it was still more lovely in its woe; for then the lips would separate, and the breath would come, and in the emotion of her suffering the life of her beauty would be unrestrained.

Her face was oval, and some might say that it was, almost too thin; they might say so till they knew it well, but would never say so when they did so know it. Her complexion was not clear, though it would be wrong to call her a brunette. Her face and forehead were never brown, but yet she could not boast the pure pink and

the pearly white which go to the formation of a clear complexion. For myself I am not sure that I love a clear complexion. Pink and white alone will not give that hue which seems best to denote light and life, and to tell of a mind that thinks and of a heart that feels. I can name no colour in describing the soft changing tints of Madeline Staveley's face, but I will make bold to say that no man ever found it insipid or inexpressive.

And now what remains for me to tell? Her nose was Grecian, but perhaps a little too wide at the nostril to be considered perfect in its chiselling. Her hair was soft and brown,—that dark brown which by some lights is almost black; but she was not a girl whose loveliness depended much upon her hair. With some women it is their great charm,—Næaras who love to sit half sleeping in the shade,—but it is a charm that possesses no powerful eloquence. All beauty of a high order should speak, and Madeleine's beauty was ever speaking. And now that I have said that, I believe that I have told all that may be necessary to place her outward form before the inward eyes of my readers.

In commencing this description I said that I would begin with her exterior; but it seems to me now that in speaking of these I have sufficiently noted also that which was within. Of her actual thoughts and deeds up to this period it is not necessary for our purposes that anything should be told; but of that which she might probably think or might possibly do, a fair guess may, I hope, be made from that which has been already written.

Such was the Staveley family. Those of their guests whom it is necessary that I should now name, have been already introduced to us. Miss Furnival was there, as was also her father. He had not intended to make any prolonged stay at Noningsby,—at least so he had said in his own drawing-room; but nevertheless he had now been there for a week, and it seemed probable that he might stay over Christmas-day. And Felix Graham was there. He had been asked with a special purpose by his friend Augustus, as we already have heard; in order, namely, that he might fall in love with Sophia Furnival, and by the aid of her supposed hatful of money avoid the evils which would otherwise so probably be the consequence of his highly impracticable turn of mind. The judge was not averse to Felix Graham; but as he himself was a man essentially practical in all his views, it often occurred that, in his mild kindly way, he ridiculed the young barrister. And Sir Peregrine Orme was there, being absent from home as on a very rare occasion; and with him of course were Mrs. Orme and his grandson. Young Perry was making, or was prepared to make, somewhat of a prolonged stay at Noningsby. He had a horse there with him for the hunting, which was changed now and again; his groom going backwards and forwards between that place and The Cleeve.

Sir Peregrine, however, intended to return before Christmas, and Mrs. Orme would go with him. He had come for four days, which for him had been a long absence from home, and at the end of the four days he would be gone.

They were all sitting in the dining-room round the luncheon-table on a hopelessly wet morning, listening to a lecture from the judge on the abomination of eating meat in the middle of the day, when a servant came behind young Orme's chair and told him that Mr. Mason was in the breakfast-parlour and wished to see him.

'Who wishes to see you?' said the baronet in a tone of surprise. He had caught the name, and thought at the moment that it was the owner of Groby Park.

'Lucius Mason,' said Peregrine, getting up. 'I wonder what he can want me for?'

'Oh, Lucius Mason,' said the grandfather. Since the discourse about agriculture he was not personally much attached even to Lucius; but for his mother's sake he could be forgiven.

'Pray ask him into lunch,' said Lady Staveley. Something had been said about Lady Mason since the Ormes had been at Norningsby, and the Staveley family were prepared to regard her with sympathy, and if necessary with the right hand of fellowship.

'He is the great agriculturist, is he not?' said Augustus. 'Bring him in by all means; there is no knowing how much we may not learn before dinner on such a day as this.'

'He is an ally of mine; and you must not laugh at him,' said Miss Furnival, who was sitting next to Augustus.

But Lucius Mason did not come in. Young Orme remained with him for about a quarter of an hour, and then returned to the room, declaring with rather a serious face, that he must ride to Hamworth and back before dinner.

'Are you going with young Mason?' asked his grandfather.

'Yes, sir; he wishes me to do something for him at Hamworth, and I cannot well refuse him.'

'You are not going to fight a duel!' said Lady Staveley, holding up her hands in horror as the idea came across her brain.

'A duel!' screamed Mrs. Orme. 'Oh, Peregrine!'

'There can be nothing of the sort,' said the judge. 'I should think that young Mason is not so foolish; and I am sure that Peregrine Orme is not.'

'I have not heard of anything of the kind,' said Peregrine, laughing.

'Promise me, Peregrine,' said his mother. 'Say that you promise me.'

'My dearest mother, I have no more thought of it than you have;—indeed I may say not so much.'

‘You will be back to dinner?’ said Lady Staveley.

‘Oh yes, certainly.’

‘And tell Mr. Mason,’ said the judge, ‘that if he will return with you we shall be delighted to see him.’

The errand which took Peregrine Orme off to Hamworth will be explained in the next chapter, but his going led to a discussion among the gentlemen after dinner as to the position in which Lady Mason was now placed. There was no longer any possibility of keeping the matter secret, seeing that Mr. Dockwrath had taken great care that every one in Hamworth should hear of it. He had openly declared that evidence would now be adduced to prove that Sir Joseph Mason’s widow had herself forged the will, and had said to many people that Mr. Mason of Groby had determined to indict her for forgery. This had gone so far that Lucius had declared as openly that he would prosecute the attorney for a libel, and Dockwrath had sent him word that he was quite welcome to do so if he pleased.

‘It is a scandalous state of things,’ said Sir Peregrine, speaking with much enthusiasm, and no little temper, on the subject. ‘Here is a question which was settled twenty years ago to the satisfaction of every one who knew anything of the case, and now it is brought up again that two men may wreak their vengeance on a poor widow. They are not men; they are brutes.’

‘But why does she not bring an action against this attorney?’ said young Staveley.

‘Such actions do not easily lie,’ said his father. ‘It may be quite true that Dockwrath may have said all manner of evil things against this lady, and yet it may be very difficult to obtain evidence of a libel. It seems to me from what I have heard that the man himself wishes such an action to be brought.’

‘And think of the state of poor Lady Mason!’ said Mr. Furnival. ‘Conceive the misery which it would occasion her if she were dragged forward to give evidence on such a matter!’

‘I believe it would kill her,’ said Sir Peregrine.

‘The best means of assisting her would be to give her some countenance,’ said the judge; ‘and from all that I can hear of her, she deserves it.’

‘She does deserve it,’ said Sir Peregrine, ‘and she shall have it. The people at Hamworth shall see at any rate that my daughter regards her as a fit associate. I am happy to say that she is coming to The Cleeve on my return home, and that she will remain there till after Christmas.’

‘It is a very singular case,’ said Felix Graham, who had been thinking over the position of the lady hitherto in silence.

‘Indeed it is,’ said the judge; ‘and it shows how careful men should be in all matters relating to their wills. The will and the

codicil, as it appears, are both in the handwriting of the widow, who acted as an amanuensis not only for her husband but for the attorney. That fact does not in my mind produce suspicion; but I do not doubt that it has produced all this suspicion in the mind of the claimant. The attorney who advised Sir Joseph should have known better.'

'It is one of those cases,' continued Graham, 'in which the sufferer should be protected by the very fact of her own innocence. No lawyer should consent to take up the cudgels against her.'

'I am afraid that she will not escape persecution from any such professional chivalry,' said the judge.

'All that is moonshine,' said Mr. Furnival.

'And moonshine is a very pretty thing if you were not too much afraid of the night air to go and look at it. If the matter be as you all say, I do think that any gentleman would disgrace himself by lending a hand against her.'

'Upon my word, sir, I fully agree with you,' said Sir Peregrine, bowing to Felix Graham over his glass.

'I will take permission to think, Sir Peregrine,' said Mr. Furnival, 'that you would not agree with Mr. Graham if you had given to the matter much deep consideration.'

'I have not had the advantage of a professional education,' said Sir Peregrine, again bowing, and on this occasion addressing himself to the lawyer; 'but I cannot see how any amount of learning should alter my views on such a subject.'

'Truth and honour cannot be altered by any professional arrangements,' said Graham; and then the conversation turned away from Lady Mason, and directed itself to those great corrections of legal reform which had been debated during the past autumn.

The Orley Farm Case, though in other forms and different language, was being discussed also in the drawing-room. 'I have not seen much of her,' said Sophia Furnival, who by some art had usurped the most prominent part in the conversation, 'but what I did see I liked much. She was at The Cleeve when I was staying there, if you remember, Mrs. Orme.' Mrs. Orme said that she did remember.

'And we went over to Orley Farm. Poor lady! I think everybody ought to notice her under such circumstances. Papa, I know, would move heaven and earth for her if he could.'

'I cannot move the heaven or the earth either,' said Lady Staveley; 'but if I thought that my calling on her would be any satisfaction to her——'

'It would, Lady Staveley,' said Mrs. Orme. 'It would be a great satisfaction to her. I cannot tell you how warmly I regard her, nor how perfectly Sir Peregrine esteems her.'

'We will drive over there next week, Madeline.'

‘Do, mamma. Everybody says that she is very nice.’

‘It will be so kind of you, Lady Staveley,’ said Sophia Furnival.

‘Next week she will be staying with us,’ said Mrs. Orme. ‘And that would save you three miles, you know, and we should be so glad to see you.’

Lady Staveley declared that she would do both. She would call at The Cleeve, and again at Orley Farm after Lady Mason’s return home. She well understood, though she could not herself then say so, that the greater part of the advantage to be received from her kindness would be derived from its being known at Hamworth that the Staveley carriage had been driven up to Lady Mason’s door.

‘Her son is very clever, is he not?’ said Madeline, addressing herself to Miss Furnival.

Sophia shrugged her shoulders and put her head on one side with a pretty grace. ‘Yes, I believe so. People say so. But who is to tell whether a young man be clever or no?’

‘But some are so much more clever than others. Don’t you think so?’

‘Oh yes, as some girls are so much prettier than others. But if Mr. Mason were to talk Greek to you, you would not think him clever.’

‘I should not understand him, you know.’

‘Of course not; but you would understand that he was a block-head to show off his learning in that way. You don’t want him to be clever, you see; you only want him to be agreeable.’

‘I don’t know that I want either the one or the other.’

‘Do you not? I know I do. I think that young men in society are bound to be agreeable, and that they should not be there if they do not know how to talk pleasantly, and to give something in return for all the trouble we take for them.’

‘I don’t take any trouble for them,’ said Madeline laughing.

‘Surely you must, if you only think of it. All ladies do, and so they ought. But if in return for that a man merely talks Greek to me, I, for my part, do not think that the bargain is fairly carried out.’

‘I declare you will make me quite afraid of Mr. Mason.’

‘Oh, he never talks Greek:—at least he never has to me. I rather like him. But what I mean is this, that I do not think a man a bit more likely to be agreeable because he has the reputation of being very clever. For my part I rather think that I like stupid young men.’

‘Oh, do you? Then now I shall know what you think of Augustus. We think he is very clever; but I do not know any man who makes himself more popular with young ladies.’

‘Ah, then he is a gay deceiver.’

‘He is gay enough, but I am sure he is no deceiver. A man may

make himself nice to young ladies without deceiving any of them; may he not?

'You must not take me "*au pied de la lettre*," Miss Staveley, or I shall be lost. Of course he may. But when young gentlemen are so very nice, young ladies are so apt to——'

'To what?'

'Not to fall in love with them exactly, but to be ready to be fallen in love with; and then if a man does do it he is a deceiver. I declare it seems to me that we don't allow them a chance of going right.'

'I think that Augustus manages to steer through such difficulties very cleverly.'

'He sails about in the open sea, touching at all the most lovely capes and promontories, and is never driven on shore by stress of weather! What a happy sailor he must be!'

'I think he is happy, and that he makes others so.'

'He ought to be made an admiral at once. But we shall hear some day of his coming to a terrible shipwreck.'

'Oh, I hope not!'

'He will return home in desperate plight, with only two planks left together, with all his glory and beauty broken and crumpled to pieces against some rock that he has despised in his pride.'

'Why do you prophesy such terrible things for him?'

'I mean that he will get married.'

'Get married! of course he will. That's just what we all want. You don't call that a shipwreck; do you?'

'It's the sort of shipwreck that these very gallant barks have to encounter.'

'You don't mean that he'll marry a disagreeable wife!'

'Oh, no; not in the least. I only mean to say that like other sons of Adam, he will have to strike his colours. I dare say, if the truth were known, he has done so already.'

'I am sure he has not.'

'I don't at all ask to know his secrets, and I should look upon you as a very bad sister if you told them.'

'But I am sure he has not got any,—of that kind.'

'Would he tell you if he had?'

'Oh, I hope so; any serious secret. I am sure he ought, for I am always thinking about him.'

'And would you tell him your secrets?'

'I have none.'

'But when you have, will you do so?'

'Will I? Well, yes; I think so. But a girl has no such secret,' she continued to say, after pausing for a moment. 'None, generally, at least, which she tells, even to herself, till the time comes in which she tells it to all whom she really loves.' And then there was another pause for a moment.

‘I am not quite so sure of that,’ said Miss Furnival. After which the gentlemen came into the drawing-room.

Augustus Staveley had gone to work in a manner which he conceived to be quite systematic, having before him the praiseworthy object of making a match between Felix Graham and Sophia Furnival. ‘By George, Graham,’ he had said, ‘the finest girl in London is coming down to Noningsby; upon my word I think she is.’

‘And brought there expressly for your delectation, I suppose.’

‘Oh no, not at all; indeed, she is not exactly in my style; she is too,—too,—too—in point of fact, too much of a girl for me. She has lots of money, and is very clever, and all that kind of thing.’

‘I never knew you so humble before.’

‘I am not joking at all. She is a daughter of old Furnival’s, whom by-the-by I hate as I do poison. Why my governor has him down at Noningsby I can’t guess. But I tell you what, old fellow, he can give his daughter five-and-twenty thousand pounds. Think of that, Master Brook.’ But Felix Graham was a man who could not bring himself to think much of such things on the spur of the moment, and when he was introduced to Sophia, he did not seem to be taken with her in any wonderful way.

Augustus had asked his mother to help him, but she had laughed at him. ‘It would be a splendid arrangement,’ he had said with energy. ‘Nonsense, Gus,’ she had answered. ‘You should always let those things take their chance. All I will ask of you is that you don’t fall in love with her yourself; I don’t think her family would be nice enough for you.’

But Felix Graham certainly was ungrateful for the friendship spent upon him, and so his friend felt it. Augustus had contrived to whisper into the lady’s ear that Mr. Graham was the cleverest young man now rising at the bar, and as far as she was concerned, some amount of intimacy might at any rate have been produced; but he, Graham himself, would not put himself forward. ‘I will pique him into it,’ said Augustus to himself, and therefore when on this occasion they came into the drawing-room, Staveley immediately took a vacant seat beside Miss Furnival, with the very friendly object which he had proposed to himself.

There was great danger in this, for Miss Furnival was certainly handsome, and Augustus Staveley was very susceptible. But what will not a man go through for his friend? ‘I hope we are to have the honour of your company as far as Monkton Grange the day we meet there,’ he said. The hounds were to meet at Monkton Grange, some seven miles from Noningsby, and all the sportsmen from the house were to be there.

‘I shall be delighted,’ said Sophia, ‘that is to say if a seat in the carriage can be spared for me.’

‘But we’ll mount you. I know that you are a horsewoman.’ In answer to which Miss Furnival confessed that she was a horsewoman, and owned also to having brought a habit and hat with her.

‘That will be delightful. Madeline will ride also, and you will meet the Miss Tristrams. They are the famous horsewomen of this part of the country.’

‘You don’t mean that they go after the dogs, across the hedges.’

‘Indeed they do.’

‘And does Miss Staveley do that?’

‘Oh, no—Madeline is not good at a five-barred gate, and would make but a very bad hand at a double ditch. If you are inclined to remain among the tame people, she will be true to your side.’

‘I shall certainly be one of the tame people, Mr. Staveley.’

‘I rather think I shall be with you myself; I have only one horse that will jump well, and Graham will ride him. By-the-by, Miss Furnival, what do you think of my friend Graham?’

‘Think of him! Am I bound to have thought anything about him by this time?’

‘Of course you are;—or at any rate of course you have. I have no doubt that you have composed in your own mind an essay on the character of everybody here. People who think at all always do.’

‘Do they? My essay upon him then is a very short one.’

‘But perhaps not the less correct on that account. You must allow me to read it.’

‘Like all my other essays of that kind, Mr. Staveley, it has been composed solely for my own use, and will be kept quite private.’

‘I am so sorry for that, for I intended to propose a bargain to you. If you would have shown me some of your essays, I would have been equally liberal with some of mine.’ And in this way, before the evening was over, Augustus Staveley and Miss Furnival became very good friends.

‘Upon my word she is a very clever girl,’ he said afterwards, as young Orme and Graham were sitting with him in an outside room which had been fitted up for smoking.

‘And uncommonly handsome,’ said Peregrine.

‘And they say she’ll have lots of money,’ said Graham. ‘After all, Staveley, perhaps you could not do better.’

‘She’s not my style at all,’ said he. ‘But of course a man is obliged to be civil to girls in his own house.’ And then they all went to bed.

CHAPTER XX.

MR. DOCKWRATH IN HIS OWN OFFICE.

IN the conversation which had taken place after dinner at Noningsby with regard to the Masons Peregrine Orme took no part, but his silence had not arisen from any want of interest on the subject. He had been over to Hamworth that day on a very special mission regarding it, and as he was not inclined to speak of what he had then seen and done, he held his tongue altogether.

‘I want you to do me a great favour,’ Lucius had said to him, when the two were together in the breakfast-parlour of Noningsby; ‘but I am afraid it will give you some trouble.’

‘I sha’n’t mind that,’ said Peregrine, ‘if that’s all.’

‘You have heard of this row about Joseph Mason and my mother? It has been so talked of that I fear you must have heard it.’

‘About the lawsuit? Oh yes. It has certainly been spoken of at The Cleeve.’

‘Of course it has. All the world is talking of it. Now there is a man named Dockwrath in Hamworth—;’ and then he went on to explain how it had reached him from various quarters that Mr. Dockwrath was accusing his mother of the crime of forgery; how he had endeavoured to persuade his mother to indict the man for libel; how his mother had pleaded to him with tears in her eyes that she found it impossible to go through such an ordeal; and how he, therefore, had resolved to go himself to Mr. Dockwrath. ‘But,’ said he, ‘I must have some one with me, some gentleman whom I can trust, and therefore I have ridden over to ask you to accompany me as far as Hamworth.’

‘I suppose he is not a man that you can kick,’ said Peregrine.

‘I am afraid not,’ said Lucius; ‘he’s over forty years old, and has dozens of children.’

‘And then he is such a low beast,’ said Peregrine.

‘I have no idea of kicking him, but I think it would be wrong to allow him to go on saying these frightful things of my mother, without showing him that we are not afraid of him.’ Upon this the two young men got on horseback, and riding into Hamworth, put their horses up at the inn.

‘And now I suppose we might as well go at once,’ said Peregrine, with a very serious face.

‘Yes,’ said the other; ‘there’s nothing to delay us. I cannot tell you how much obliged I am to you for coming with me.’

‘Oh, don’t say anything about that; of course I’m only too happy.’ But all the same he felt that his heart was beating, and that he was a little nervous. Had he been called upon to go in and thrash somebody, he would have been quite at home; but he did not feel at his ease in making an inimical visit to an attorney’s office.

It would have been wise, perhaps, if in this matter Lucius had submitted himself to Lady Mason’s wishes. On the previous evening they had talked the matter over with much serious energy. Lucius had been told in the streets of Hamworth by an intermeddling little busybody of an apothecary that it behoved him to do something, as Mr. Dockwrath was making greivous accusations against his mother. Lucius had replied haughtily, that he and his mother would know how to protect themselves, and the apothecary had retreated, resolving to spread the report everywhere. Lucius on his return home had declared to the unfortunate lady that she had now no alternative left to her. She must bring an action against the man, or at any rate put the matter into the hands of a lawyer with a view of ascertaining whether she could do so with any chance of success. If she could not, she must then make known her reason for remaining quiet. In answer to this, Lady Mason had begun by praying her son to allow the matter to pass by.

‘But it will not pass by,’ Lucius had said.

‘Yes, dearest, if we leave it, it will,—in a month or two. We can do nothing by interference. Remember the old saying, You cannot touch pitch without being defiled.’

But Lucius had replied, almost with anger, that the pitch had already touched him, and that he was defiled. ‘I cannot consent to hold the property,’ he had said, ‘unless something be done.’ And then his mother had bowed her head as she sat, and had covered her face with her hands.

‘I shall go to the man myself,’ Lucius had declared with energy.

‘As your mother, Lucius, I implore you not to do so,’ she had said to him through her tears.

‘I must either do that or leave the country. It is impossible that I should live here, hearing such things said of you, and doing nothing to clear your name.’ To this she had made no actual reply, and now he was standing at the attorney’s door about to do that which he had threatened.

They found Mr. Dockwrath sitting at his desk at the other side of which was seated his clerk. He had not yet promoted himself to the dignity of a private office, but generally used his parlour as

such when he was desirous of seeing his clients without disturbance. On this occasion, however, when he saw young Mason enter, he made no offer to withdraw. His hat was on his head as he sat on his stool, and he did not even take it off as he returned the stiff salutation of his visitor. 'Keep your hat on your head Mr. Orme,' he said, as Peregrine was about to take his off. 'Well, gentlemen, what can I do for you?'

Lucius looked at the clerk, and felt that there would be great difficulty in talking about his mother before such a witness. 'We wish to see you in private, Mr. Dockwrath, for a few minutes—if it be convenient.'

'Is not this private enough?' said Dockwrath. 'There is no one here but my confidential clerk.'

'If you could make it convenient——' began Lucius.

'Well, then, Mr. Mason, I cannot make it convenient, and there is the long and the short of it. You have brought Mr. Orme with you to hear what you've got to say, and I choose that my clerk shall remain by to hear it also. Seeing the position in which you stand there is no knowing what may come of such an interview as this.'

'In what position do I stand, sir?'

'If you don't know, Mr. Mason, I am not going to tell you. I feel for you, I do upon my word. I feel for you, and I pity you.' Mr. Dockwrath as he thus expressed his commiseration was sitting with his high chair tilted back, with his knees against the edge of his desk, with his hat almost down upon his nose as he looked at his visitors from under it, and he amused himself by cutting up a quill pen into small pieces with his penknife. It was not pleasant to be pitied by such a man as that, and so Peregrine Orme conceived.

'Sir, that is nonsense,' said Lucius. 'I require no pity from you or from any man.'

'I don't suppose there is one in all Hamworth that does not feel for you,' said Dockwrath.

'He means to be impudent,' said Peregrine. 'You had better come to the point with him at once.'

'No, I don't mean to be impudent, young gentleman. A man may speak his own mind in his own house I suppose without any impudence. You wouldn't stand cap in hand to me if I were to go down to you at The Cleeve.'

'I have come here to ask of you,' said Lucius, 'whether it be true that you are spreading these reports about the town with reference to Lady Mason. If you are a man you will tell me the truth.'

'Well; I rather think I am a man.'

'It is necessary that Lady Mason should be protected from such

infamous falsehoods, and it may be necessary to bring the matter into a court of law——'

'You may be quite easy about that, Mr. Mason. It will be necessary.'

'As it may be necessary, I wish to know whether you will acknowledge that these reports have come from you?'

'You want me to give evidence against myself. Well, for once in a way I don't mind if I do. The reports have come from me. Now, is that manly?' And Mr. Dockwrath, as he spoke, pushed his hat somewhat off his nose, and looked steadily across into the face of his opponent.

Lucius Mason was too young for the task which he had undertaken, and allowed himself to be disconcerted. He had expected that the lawyer would deny the charge, and was prepared for what he would say and do in such a case; but now he was not prepared.

'How on earth could you bring yourself to be guilty of such villainy?' said young Orme.

'Highly-tightly! What are you talking about, young man? The fact is, you do not know what you are talking about. But as I have a respect for your grandfather and for your mother I will give you and them a piece of advice, gratis. Don't let them be too thick with Lady Mason till they see how this matter goes.'

'Mr. Dockwrath,' said Lucius, 'you are a mean, low, vile scoundrel.'

'Very well, sir. Adams, just take a note of that. Don't mind what Mr. Orme said. I can easily excuse him. He'll know the truth before long, and then he'll beg my pardon.'

'I'll take my oath I look upon you as the greatest miscreant that ever I met,' said Peregrine, who was of course bound to support his friend.

'You'll change your mind, Mr. Orme, before long, and then you'll find that you have met a worse miscreant than I am. Did you put down those words, Adams?'

'Them as Mr. Mason spoke? Yes; I've got them down.'

'Read them,' said the master.

And the clerk read them, 'Mr. Dockwrath, you are a mean, low, vile scoundrel.'

'And now, young gentlemen, if you have got nothing else to observe, as I am rather busy, perhaps you will allow me to wish you good morning.'

'Very well, Mr. Dockwrath,' said Mason; 'you may be sure that you will hear further from me.'

'We shall be sure to hear of each other. There is no doubt in the world about that,' said the attorney. And then the two young men withdrew with an unexpressed feeling in the mind of each of

them, that they had not so completely got the better of their antagonist as the justice of their case demanded.

They then remounted their horses, and Orme accompanied his friend as far as Orley Farm, from whence he got into the Alston road through The Cleeve grounds. 'And what do you intend to do now?' said Peregrine as soon as they were mounted.

'I shall employ a lawyer,' said he, 'on my own footing; not my mother's lawyer, but some one else. Then I suppose I shall be guided by his advice.' Had he done this before he made his visit to Mr. Dockwrath, perhaps it might have been better. All this sat very heavily on poor Peregrine's mind; and therefore as the company were talking about Lady Mason after dinner, he remained silent, listening, but not joining in the conversation.

The whole of that evening Lucius and his mother sat together, saying nothing. There was not absolutely any quarrel between them, but on this terrible subject there was an utter want of accordance, and almost of sympathy. It was not that Lucius had ever for a moment suspected his mother of aught that was wrong. Had he done so he might perhaps have been more gentle towards her in his thoughts and words. He not only fully trusted her, but he was quite fixed in his confidence that nothing could shake either her or him in their rights. But under these circumstances he could not understand how she could consent to endure without resistance the indignities which were put upon her. 'She should combat them for my sake, if not for her own,' he said to himself over and over again. And he had said so also to her, but his words had had no effect.

She, on the other hand, felt that he was cruel to her. She was weighed down almost to the ground by these sufferings which had fallen on her, and yet he would not be gentle and soft to her. She could have borne it all, she thought, if he would have borne with her. She still hoped that if she remained quiet no further trial would take place. At any rate this might be so. That it would be so she had the assurance of Mr. Furnival. And yet all this evil which she dreaded worse than death was to be precipitated on her by her son! So they sat through the long evening, speechless; each seated with the pretence of reading, but neither of them capable of the attention which a book requires.

He did not tell her then that he had been with Mr. Dockwrath, but she knew by his manner that he had taken some terrible step. She waited patiently the whole evening, hoping that he would tell her, but when the hour came for her to go up to her room he had told her nothing. If he now were to turn against her, that would be worse than all! She went up to her room and sat herself down to think. All that passed through her brain on that night I may not now tell; but the grief which pressed on her at this moment

with peculiar weight was the self-will and obstinacy of her boy. She said to herself that she would be willing now to die,—to give back her life at once, if such might be God's pleasure; but that her son should bring down her hairs with shame and sorrow to the grave——! In that thought there was a bitterness of agony which she knew not how to endure!

The next morning at breakfast he still remained silent, and his brow was still black. 'Lucius,' she said, 'did you do anything in that matter yesterday?'

'Yes, mother; I saw Mr. Dockwrath.'

'Well?'

'I took Peregrine Orme with me that I might have a witness, and I then asked him whether he had spread these reports. He acknowledged that he had done so, and I told him that he was a villain.'

Upon hearing this she uttered a long, low sigh, but she said nothing. What use could there now be in her saying aught? Her look of agony went to the young man's heart, but he still thought that he had been right. 'Mother,' he continued to say, 'I am very sorry to grieve you in this way;—very sorry. But I could not hold up my head in Hamworth,—I could not hold up my head anywhere, if I heard these things said of you and did not resent it.'

'Ah, Lucius, if you knew the weakness of a woman!'

'And therefore you should let me bear it all. There is nothing I would not suffer; no cost I would not undergo rather than you should endure all this. If you would only say that you would leave it to me!'

'But it cannot be left to you. I have gone to a lawyer, to Mr. Furnival. Why will you not permit that I should act in it as he thinks best? Can you not believe that that will be the best for both of us?'

'If you wish it, I will see Mr. Furnival?'

Lady Mason did not wish that, but she was obliged so far to yield as to say that he might do so if he would. Her wish was that he should bear it all and say nothing. It was not that she was indifferent to good repute among her neighbours, or that she was careless as to what the apothecaries and attorneys said of her; but it was easier for her to bear the evil than to combat it. The Ormes and the Furnivals would support her. They and such-like persons would acknowledge her weakness, and would know that from her would not be expected such loud outbursting indignation as might be expected from a man. She had calculated the strength of her own weakness, and thought that she might still be supported by that,—if only her son would so permit.

It was two days after this that Lucius was allowed the honour of a conference by appointment with the great lawyer; and at the ex-

piration of an hour's delay he was shown into the room by Mr. Crabwitz. 'And, Crabwitz,' said the barrister, before he addressed himself to his young friend, 'just run your eye over those papers, and let Mr. Bideawhile have them to-morrow morning; and, Crabwitz——'

'Yes, sir.'

'That opinion of Sir Richard's in the Ahatualpaca Mining Company—I have not seen it, have I?'

'It's all ready, Mr. Furnival.'

'I will look at it in five minutes. And now, my young friend, what can I do for you?'

It was quite clear from Mr. Furnival's tone and manner that he did not mean to devote much time to Lucius Mason, and that he was not generally anxious to hold any conversation with him on the subject in question. Such, indeed, was the case. Mr. Furnival was determined to pull Lady Mason out of the sea of trouble into which she had fallen, let the effort cost him what it might, but he did not wish to do so by the instrumentality, or even with the aid, of her son.

'Mr. Furnival,' began Mason, 'I want to ask your advice about these dreadful reports which are being spread on every side in Hamworth about my mother.'

'If you will allow me then to say so, I think that the course which you should pursue is very simple. Indeed there is, I think, only one course which you can pursue with proper deference to your mother's feelings.'

'And what is that, Mr. Furnival?'

'Do nothing, and say nothing. I fear from what I have heard that you have already done and said much more than was prudent.'

'But how am I to hear such things as these spoken of my own mother?'

'That depends on the people by whom the things are spoken. In this world, if we meet a chimney-sweep in the path we do not hustle with him for the right of way. Your mother is going next week to The Cleeve. It was only yesterday that I heard that the Noningsby people are going to call on her. You can hardly, I suppose, desire for your mother better friends than such as these. And can you not understand why such people gather to her at this moment? If you can understand it you will not trouble yourself to interfere much more with Mr. Dockwrath.'

There was a rebuke in this which Lucius Mason was forced to endure; but nevertheless as he retreated disconcerted from the barrister's chambers, he could not bring himself to think it right that such calumny should be borne without resistance. He knew but little as yet of the ordinary life of gentlemen in England; but he did know,—so at least he thought,—that it was the duty of a son to shield his mother from insult and libel.

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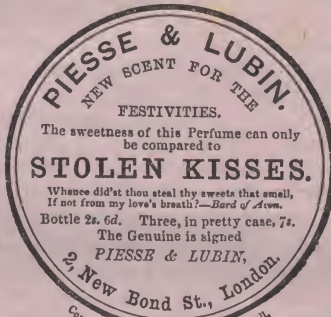
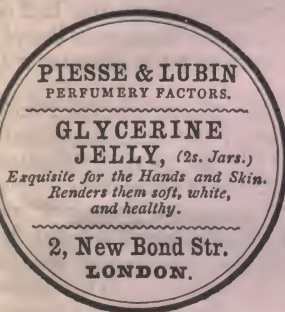
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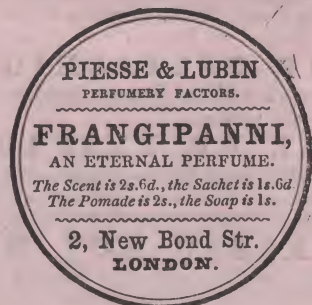
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APPEAL.

THE COMMITTEE OF MANAGEMENT have to state that, during the past year, the INSTITUTION has incurred expenses amounting to £6,258. 1s. on the following Life-boat Stations:—

ENGLAND.

NEWBIGGIN, Northumberland.
SALTBURN, Yorkshire.
FILEY,
CAISTOR, Norfolk.
ALDBOROUGH, Suffolk.
MARGATE, Kent.
WALMER,
SEISEY, West Sussex.
GRANGE, Isle of Wight.
BROOKE, "

PENZANCE, Cornwall.

ST. IVES, "
NEWQUAY, "
PENARTH, Glamorganshire.
LLANDWYNN, Anglesey.
LLANDUDNO, Carnarvonshire.
SOUTHPORT, Lancashire.
LYTHAM,
SILLOTH, Cumberland.

SCOTLAND.

AYR, Ayrshire.

IRVINE, Ayrshire.
KANTYRE, Argyleshire.
BUCKIE, Banffshire.
JANFF, "
ST. ANDREW'S, Fifeshire.
NORTH BERWICK, Haddingtonshire.

IRELAND.

PORTRUSH, Antrim.
TYRELLA, Dundrum Bay.

The Institution has also expended on the repairs, stores, alterations, and inspection of its numerous Life-boats, Boat-houses, and Transporting-carriages, £3,632. 19s., and £1,550 for exercising the crews of its Life-boats, making altogether a total of £11,441.

During the past year the LIFE-BOATS of the Institution have been instrumental in rescuing the crews of the following wrecked vessels:—

Schooner <i>Ann Mitchell</i> , of Montrose	1	Brigantine <i>Nancy</i> , of Teignmouth...	9	Schooner <i>Admiral Hood</i> , of Rochester	6
Schooner <i>Jane Roper</i> , of Ulverstone	6	Smack <i>Wonder</i> , of Teignmouth...	2	Schooner <i>Susan and Isabella</i> , of	
Brig <i>Pallas</i> , of Shields	3	Brig <i>Scotia</i> , of Sunderland	6	Dundee	5
Ship <i>Ann Mitchell</i> , of Glasgow	9	Sloop <i>Three Brothers</i> , of Goole	5	Schooner <i>Rose</i> , of Lynn	3
Smack <i>John Bull</i> , of Yarmouth	5	Sloop <i>Charlotte</i> , of Woodbridge	5	Brig <i>Prodroma</i> , of Stockton	11
Schooner <i>Catherine</i> , of Newry	4	Brig <i>Ann</i> , of Blyth	8	Brig <i>Eliza</i> , of Middlesborough	7
Barque <i>Niagara</i> , of Shields	11	Sloop <i>Hope</i> , of Dublin	5	Brigantine <i>Freia</i> , of Königsberg	6
A Barge of Teignmouth	2	Schooner <i>Druid</i> , of Aberystwith	5	" <i>Diana</i> , of Fredrikshamn	7
Brig <i>George and James</i> , of London	8	Barque <i>Vermont</i> , of Halifax, U.S.	16	Brig <i>Gloucester</i> , of South Shields	7
Brig <i>Zephyr</i> , of Whitby	6	Schooner <i>William Keith</i> , of Carnarvon	2		
Coble <i>Honour</i> , of Cullercoats	3	Brig, <i>Flying Fish</i> , of Whitby	5		
Schooner <i>Eliza</i> , of North Shields	7	Smack <i>Elizabeth Ann</i> , of Lyme Regis	3		
Barque <i>Oberon</i> , of Liverpool	15	Steam Dredge, at Newhaven	9		
				Total 210	

For these and other Life-boat Services the Institution has voted £908. 8s. 4d. as rewards. It has also granted rewards amounting to £203. 4s. for saving 245 shipwrecked persons, by shore-boats and other means, making a total of 455 persons saved from a watery grave.

During the few months that have passed of the present year (1861), the Life-boats of the Institution have also been instrumental in rescuing nearly *Two Hundred* persons from different shipwrecks.

The public cannot but sympathise with the vigorous efforts now being made by this Society, to save the lives of Shipwrecked Crews. Their help was never more needed than at the present time, when, through the extraordinary exertions the Society has made within the past few years, it has now One Hundred and Twelve Life-boats under its management, for the maintenance of which, in a state of thorough efficiency, a large permanent *annual income* is absolutely needed, if its humane mission is to be perpetuated.

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Plate a strong deposit of real Silver, according to price charged.

SPOONS, FORKS, &c.

ELECTRO-SILVER PLATE ON HARD NICKEL SILVER.

No.	Per set of 4 dishes.	MAPPIN BROTHERS CELEBRATED TABLE CUTLERY.											
E 3678 Gadron oblong Pattern, Light Plat.	£8 8 0	None are GENUINE WITHOUT the Crowned Mark. "THE SUN."											
K 5137 Beaded Eagle and Handle, similar to K 4003*	10 15 0	Fiddle. Threaded. King's.											
E 1756 Ditto	13 6 0	Plated extra Strong.			Medium Plating.			Plated extra Strong.			Medium Plating.		
E 4012 Antique Scroll Pattern, Melon shaped Dish.	12 0 0	Plated extra Strong.			Medium Plating.			Plated extra Strong.			Medium Plating.		
L 4013 Beaded Pattern Dish.	13 4 0	Plated extra Strong.			Medium Plating.			Plated extra Strong.			Medium Plating.		
By removing the handles from the (overs the Set of Four can be made to form a Set of Eight Dishes.													
E 1792 Norfolk Pattern, a very elaborate design, with rich Scroll Border all round.	17 10 0	Table Spoons .			Do. Forks .			Dessert Spoons .			Do. Forks .		
Hot Water Dishes for above	15 0 0	Ives Spoons .			Soup Ladles each			Gravy Spoons .			Sauce Ladles .		
P 1797 Threaded Pattern, equally good as the Norfolk Pattern.	16 12 0	3s. 6d.			4s. 6d.			5s. 6d.			6s. 6d.		
Hot Water Dishes for above . . . extra	15 10 0	3s. 6d.			4s. 6d.			5s. 6d.			6s. 6d.		
Ordinary Medium Best													
Quality. Quality. Quality.													
Two dozen full-size Table Knives, ivory handles	£2 4 0	1 4 0			1 14 0			£2 12 0			2 11 0		
One-and-a-half dozen full size Cheese ditto	•	•			•			•			•		
One pair regular Meat Carvers	•	7 6 0			0 11 0			0 15 6			0 15 6		
One pair extra-size ditto	•	0 5 6			0 12 0			0 15 6			0 15 6		
One pair Poultry Carvers	•	7 6 0			0 11 0			0 15 6			0 15 6		
One Steel for sharpening	•	0 3 0			0 4 0			0 6 0			0 6 0		

CUTLERY.

Two dozen full-size Table Knives, ivory handles	•	£2 4 0	£3 6 0	£4 12 0
One-and-a-half dozen Full size Cheese ditto	•	1 4 0	1 14 0	2 11 0
One pair Regular Meat Carvers	•	0 7 6	0 11 0	0 15 6
One pair extra-size ditto	•	0 8 6	0 12 0	0 15 6
One pair Poultry Carvers	•	0 7 6	0 11 0	0 15 6
One Steel for sharpening	•	0 3 0	0 4 0	0 6 0

MAPPIN BROTHERS, 67 & 68, KING WILLIAM STREET, LONDON BRIDGE.

Manufactory: Queen's Cutlery Works, Sheffield.